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**Mars Science Lab launch party celebrates INL contribution to mission**

IDAHO FALLS — On Saturday, media and members of the public are invited to join Idaho National Laboratory employees to watch NASA's Mars Science Laboratory launch.

The mission's launch window opens Saturday morning, though weather and other factors could force delays. If the launch is halted on Saturday, the next launch window opens Sunday morning. Check the following INL or NASA websites for the latest launch information:

- [http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/msl/news/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/msl/news/index.html)
- <http://www.inl.gov/marsrover/>

When the rover Curiosity heads to space as early as Saturday, it will carry the most advanced payload of scientific gear ever used on Mars' surface. Those instruments will get their lifeblood from a nuclear power system assembled and tested at INL. The Multi-Mission Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator is the latest "space battery" that can reliably power a deep space mission for many years.

NASA has used nuclear generators to safely and reliably power 26 missions over the past 50 years. New generators like the one destined for Mars are painstakingly assembled and extensively tested at INL before heading to space. More information is available in Monday's news release, which is posted at [www.inl.gov](http://www.inl.gov).

**What:** INL Mars Science Laboratory launch celebration

**When:** Saturday, Nov. 26

7 a.m. – Begin watching launch preparations and countdown

7:30 a.m. – Background on INL's role in providing power systems to NASA

8 a.m. – Follow NASA countdown to launch with explanation of what is happening

**Where:** Shilo Inn, Temple View/River View Rooms, 780 Lindsay Blvd., Idaho Falls

**Who:** Interested members of the public, the media and employees

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